



## TEACHING PRAGMATICS BY EXPRESSING AND GIVING COMPLIMENTS

Yakubova Dilnozakhon  
FSU English Teacher

### Annotation

The pragmatic objectives of this show that Expressing and giving compliments is the essential part of any society in the world, strengthening ties in community groups. Students will understand the pragmatic target function by being provided with such kind of discussion because through this discussion students will take insights about pragmatic aspects. Pragmatic variation was introduced in the DCT activity by giving students a chance to complete the task by giving and recording the task with their interaction itself which makes the task pragmatically varied.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Expressing and giving compliments, the DCT activity, oral skills.

### Introduction

The lesson designed for Teaching Giving and Responding to compliments is explicitly developed for ESL students who are upper-intermediate and study the course targeting to enhance oral production in US university. This class aims to develop and master the English language by strengthening communicative skills focusing on the daily routine and successfully managing to use English for educational and career plans.

The pragmatic objectives of this show that Expressing and giving compliments is the essential part of any society in the world, strengthening ties in community groups. Moreover, students will have an opportunity to discover how other people from different cultures give and accept compliments. Furthermore, students will know where and how to compliment to people with different social statuses, adequacy and acceptability of the theme of compliments. Students will enhance pragmatic oral skills by being engaged to work with a partner being provided to talk about different situations.

The instructor designed a discussion by initiating students to lead a conversation about the difficulties in studying English to raise students' awareness of pragmatics. Students will understand the pragmatic target function by being provided with such kind of discussion because through this discussion students will take insights about pragmatic aspects.





Moreover, prompts provided in the task seem to raise socio-pragmatic norms as the class's goal was to enhance oral skill in daily and academic purposes. Moreover, students are involved actively to observe and learn about various cultural norms in context. The teacher triggers students' noticing skills by providing cross-cultural examples and explaining that the straight translation and pragmatic definition may not match in some situations.

Interactive activities included are handouts where students are asked to complete it (DCT) by analyzing and taking notes of three or more compliments (they express, respond to compliments), considering some factors such as age, gender, social position. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) believe that DCT is a general approach to assess speech acts in written discourse. Moreover, the activity such as responding to compliments is also illustrated where students should apply multiple strategies to respond to compliments. Then, an activity involving mingling is practiced where students are asked to stand in a circle (inner and outer) and provide compliments to each other, trying to use new compliments learned during the lesson (inner to outer and vice versa). There, students can practice oral skills by enhancing and drilling vocabulary using various adjectives and grammatical structures, which makes the activities strong enough to implement.

Pragmatic variation was introduced in the DCT activity by giving students a chance to complete the task by giving and recording the task with their interaction itself which makes the task pragmatically varied. Moreover, in the task to compliment responses, it is visible that the teacher demonstrated pragmatic variation in the instructions where students had to analyze their data and share the insights with the class. In the mingling activity, the students have to analyze and give compliments accordingly to the partner and think about their attitude towards each other; however, this activity is not diversified enough as they have to produce only learned phrases during the class.

Students' level of proficiency is high intermediate and students have different backgrounds with learning and living in second language speaking societies and each student's mother tongue differs from one another. As American English is suitable and appropriate for the target group, the instructions may be implemented with other Englishes and other students where giving and responding to compliments will be taught to different people with various cultural backgrounds. This class will help them broaden their horizons in terms of pragmatic norms and boost their academic English. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) state that students may sometimes be misconfused or unaware of other cultures' pragmatic norms, which indicates a negative transfer from L1. ESL student's cultural background and their L1 differs from the partner's they





sometimes not on purpose may hurt or even upset them (however they do not want to embarrass anyone, in their L1, that term or compliment is socially acceptable one but in another culture, it is not very respectful).

The students appear to be strongly motivated as they are engaged in copious activities that make them interact and enhance the pragmatic awareness of speech-act, particularly giving and responding to compliments. Billmyer (1990) and Dunham (1992) insist that compliments are usually associated as "social lubricant," which means that students will be aware of how to establish and build new relationships in society in a smooth way. That is why students are so motivated to learn pragmatics as no one of them knows what to expect from the future and each of them will be prepared to face such situations after finishing this class.

Students' assessment based on different types and learners can assess themselves or be allowed to do a peer evaluation (being constructive is required). Ishihara and Cohen (2010) notice that self-assessment helps students take responsibility for constructively and fairly assess themselves by criteria that the teacher provides. When it comes to informal assessment, students can be checked directly during the class by being provided with feedback. Another type of assessment incorporated is assessing productive skills by prompting students to role-play to assess pragmalinguistic performance. Students are open to assessing their pragmatics by being guided by the teacher, and the assessment based on the learner's intention is equal.

The designed lesson is well organized and smoothly flows from instructions to activities and assessment parts. There is no doubt that these activities will only help students to increase their pragmatic awareness, but when it comes to incorporating them in my future class, I have hesitation as it would be more than challenging to teach students pragmatic norms (first to teach language, then to teach pragmatic norms). However, it would be a great experience to organize lessons like this one in my future classes. Moreover, I would add minor additions to this class, such as musical background when students have mingling activity and technological resources such as watching a video about several cultures giving and responding to compliments accompanying with a multimodal presentation explaining grammar structures with some elements of speech act illustrations. Nevertheless, I believe that this kind of lesson is fully eligible to be taken as an example of a good lesson regarding raising pragmatic awareness of the learners.





## References

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